

Meeting Minutes

City Plan Commission

Monday, November 7, 2005, 4:00 p.m. PRESENT: Ch. Mayor Wescott; Jerry Moore; Karen Aldinger; Lois Feldman; Ann Shannon; Fred Steffen; Jeff Zabel

ALSO PRESENT: Comm. Dev. Dir. John Gardner; Ald. Sevenich, Molski, Stroik; Po. Co. Senior Planner Jeff Schuler; Po. Co. Asst. Planner Sarah Wallace; Chris Fish; Mike Bronk; Elizabeth LaRose; Gene Kemmeter, Portage County Gazette

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1. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 3, 2005 PLAN COMMISSION MEETING

Jerry Moore moved, seconded by Lois Feldman, to recommend approval of the minutes of the October 3, 2005 meeting. Ayes all; Nays none; Motion carried.

2. SENTRY DIRECTIONAL SIGN APPEAL

John Gardner reviewed his staff report and provided slides of the proposed signs. All of their signs are being replaced, however, four of them require permission because exceed 6 square feet in size. He noted these signs are similar to the directional signs approved by the city at St. Michael's Hospital. Staff feels the unusually large frontage allows the Plan Commission the flexibility to approve 2 signs per frontage instead of 2 signs total. Because of the large amount of site frontage, the directional nature of the signs, and the modest size of the proposed signs, staff recommends approval because a literal application would result in difficulty directing the public to the proper location and approval would not be detrimental to owners in the vicinity.

Karen Aldinger feels the signs will be an improvement because she has problems finding her way around.

Ch. Wescott moved, seconded by Karen Aldinger, to recommend approval of the appeal by Sentry Insurance to increase the size of the entrance directional signs located on North Point Drive because of the large amount of site frontage, the directional nature of the signs, and the modest size of the proposed signs and because the approval will meet the purpose of the ordinance (encourage effective use of a sign, enhance the beauty and unique character of the sire, to protect motorists by proper sizing of signs, minimize the adverse effect of signs on nearby properties, and to promote free flow of traffic and public safety). A literal application of the ordinance would result in difficulty directing the public to the proper location and approval would not be materially detrimental to owners in the vicinity.

Ayes Aldinger, Feldman, Shannon, Moore, Steffen, and Ch. Wescott;
Nays none; Motion carried. (Jeff Zabel abstained)

3. VACATE PORTION OF KREMBS AVE. - SOUTH OF COYE DR.
4. VACATE PORTION OF DIVISION ST. - SOUTH OF MARIA DR.

John Gardner noted the wide right-of-way on Krembs Ave. was put there to anticipate the possible needs of a future railroad spur. The nature of the buildings south of Coye Drive do not require use of rail. Staff recommends reducing the width of Krembs Ave. on the east portion of the ROW. Division Street was widened many years ago and relocated slightly west of the former alignment. In many cases, the right-of-way has been used for parking and reclaiming it would eliminate a number of parking spaces. Staff recommends vacating the right-of-way within a range of 0.7 feet to 4 feet east of the sidewalk as shown on the map.

Lois Feldman questioned if there would be any monetary exchange on Division St.

John Gardner responded the city holds streets in trust so if they are no longer needed, they revert back to the property owner.

Fred Steffen moved, seconded by Ann Shannon, to recommend approval of vacating a portion of Krembs Avenue, south of Coye Drive, by reducing the width of Krembs Avenue from 50 feet east of the reference line to 30 feet east of the reference line (reduce the ROW by 20 feet from the existing ROW line - see attached map). Ayes all; Nays none; Motion carried.

Fred Steffen moved, seconded by Ann Shannon, to recommend approval of vacating the right-of-way within a range of .07 feet to 4 feet east of the sidewalk on Division Street, south of Maria Drive (see attached map). Ayes all; Nays none; Motion carried.

5. PROPOSED DOWNTOWN TAX INCREMENT DISTRICT

Chm. Wescott noted we introduced the concept of a downtown Tax Increment District. It is his belief that a number of projects will follow into the downtown based on what we have seen. The staff memo reviews the advantages of a larger district and he feels it makes sense and is clearly in the advantage of the community to look at a large district so that we reserve our ability to amend the boundaries in the future. No motion is required today other than asking staff to continue refining the size of the district.

Ann Shannon asked if there are have been any numbers run as to what a larger TIF district would do to the other taxing entities?

John Gardner responded it is his understanding that school districts would be held harmless.

Ald. Stroik noted he would like to see more of the west side included, such as the commercial corridor along Clark Street.

Fred Steffen suggested going south on Water Street to Brawley Street.

Chm. Wescott noted he anticipates returning in December with a developers agreement and more specific recommendations on the boundary for the proposed tax incremental district.

6. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- Intergovernmental Cooperation

- Land Use
- Implementation

John Gardner noted our goal is to have a recommendation to the Council in December which would allow us this meeting, the November 28 meeting, and the first meeting in December to finalize the plan.

Jerry Moore noted the first topic under Section 7.4 deals with working with the school district. Do we really want to get into a debate with what they should do with their schools and buildings. The City Council does not control the schools and we should not leave that impression.

Chm. Wescott noted the appropriate question should be what assistance can we provide. We have no legal role in the school district, but it is important that we have a voice.

Ann Shannon noted these are all public buildings and we are all taxpayers. If we are going to talk density issues, we are going to need these buildings open to the public. We should not demand, but we should certainly be players in the process. Those buildings are tremendous resources to the community.

Ald. Stroik feels it is worded pretty well, it does say "input". It would be nice to have someone on city staff providing input when situations like closing a school come up.

Chm. Wescott suggested reversing the first sentence to say "The school district should work with the city on".

Lois Feldman questioned if there will be some things changing on the former Emerson School site.

Chm. Wescott responded it has been his goal to create Emerson Teacher's Park to create a park that is dedicated to our past, present, and future educators at all levels. The school system is receptive to that and it is a matter of getting to it.

Gardner will work with Ald. Moore to create language to reflect his concerns.

John Gardner noted Section 7.5 and indicated the city continues to meet with the Towns of Hull, Plover, and Stockton on extraterritorial land use issues. Section 7.6 deals with goals and objectives.

Following discussion, commissioners recommended removing the words "where appropriate" wherever used in Section 7.6.

John Gardner noted we will be meeting with the Town of Stockton later in November, and will be adopting all of the plan in December. He would like commissioners to be thinking about land forms and working around groundwater.

Ann Shannon noted she has really appreciated the meetings with the Town of Stockton and finds them very rewarding.

Meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

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